241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[256] Mouï (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 273 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk [579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 [296] 462 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned, and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

766 The death of a naba, as we mentioned earlier, is carefully concealed; the more powerful he was, the more careful the concealment.
● 579 This is done out of fear of the disturbances which would be created by those who aspire to his succession, or by scoundrels who might take advantage of the absence of authority to indulge in every kind of robbery. At the death of the Moro Naba his province was sacked by armed bands, and no one dared to go out unarmed. On the day following the death of Moro Naba Sigri, we had to fetch millet from a village located a few kilometers from Ouagadougou. All the bearers were armed with bows, arrows, and spears. They made an interesting picture in the moonlight.

766 In spite of all their amulets and all their sacrifices, nabas die just like their subjects, and when this happens, his relatives hastily dig a pit in the entrance hut of the soukala and lay the corpse there without any ceremonies. Those wishing to see the naba will be told that he is unwell. The naba of Koupéla is especially favored in this respect. One of the huts in his soukala, standing near the entrance, is set aside for his burial. A pit has been dug within the hut, and every /72/ day the caretaker comes to pour dolo into the hole. This caretaker must not have a wife, and if he happens to have one before his appointment to this post, the naba takes her for himself. On the other hand, the caretaker eats the same food as the naba and drinks the same millet beer. Needless to say, this job is not in great demand. The
[761] naba may not enter the hut, and when the roof is in need of repair, the drummers are sent for, and the naba must flee; woe to him if he should hear the sound of the drums, for he would die within the year. When the naba of Koupéla dies, his hands and feet are immediately pierced with big thorns so that he may not return; should he venture to seize one of his people after his death, the thorns would cause him such pain that he would immediately let go of his prey. The corpse is tossed into the pit to fall as it may. The Mossi, full of respect for their chiefs when they are alive, make up for it when they are dead.

Young unmarried men or girls are buried with a previously deceased old woman of the family, so that someone will take care of them in the other life. Their death is regarded as a true misfortune and mourned accordingly. There are no dances or ceremonies. The father, mother, and younger siblings shave their heads on the second or third day after the burial.

[775] A small child is buried by the path. He will soon return in the person of the first child borne by his mother after his death.

died while he was using it, the owner could not press any claims. However, the borrower was obliged to sell the animal's flesh and give the money to the owner along with the animal's skin as proof of its death. Under no circumstances would a district chief absolve a man from paying the market value of an animal if he failed to return the skin. Such failure would brand him as a thief and involve an additional fine.

The Mossi considered theft a major crime. A thief could be killed with impunity if he was caught in the act and in the presence of several witnesses. If these conditions were not met but the man killed was known to have been a thief, the killer was fined several cows. But if he was known to have been a man of good character, the killer ran the risk of being executed. In this way, the Mossi tried to prevent any abuse of an accepted practice. The theft of grain and other foodstuffs was considered especially reprehensible, because it was held to indicate that the thief was so depraved that he would not even grow his own food. During the rule of Naba Kaglere of Nobere district (1888–1906), a man called Yahiya left his own village of Donse and went to a village called Quitenga to steal sweet potatoes. The people of that village caught him in the act and shot him with a poisoned arrow as he made his escape. Yahiya died without revealing the source of his wound, and his babissi, suspecting foul play, asked Kaglere to investigate. When the Quitenga people learned of the investigation, they went forward voluntarily and reported the circumstances under which they had wounded Yahiya. Kaglere absolved them of all guilt and told the Donse people that Yahiya had deserved to die, not only because he had stolen food (which he might have received if he had asked for it), but because sweet potatoes were the easiest vegetable to cultivate.

A thief who was too clever to be caught in the act but who was apprehended afterwards was treated quite harshly by the Mossi court. Here, the penalty of double indemnity was often applied. A man who was brought to court for stealing a chicken or guinea hen was fined a goat or a sheep. Hence the Mossi proverb "Zou noaga ronda bouga"—"He who steals a chicken repays a goat." The thief who stole one cow had to return several. If a thief could not pay the fine, he was placed in stocks until his relatives paid for him. If they refused to do so, the chief's retainers seized their property, sold it, and made restitution. This often compelled the family of a recidivous thief to make him commit suicide. If the family would not resort to this, the district chief had the man seized and clubbed to death.[7] Sometimes the chief sent recidivists to the Mogho Naba, who sent them to a village called Teemetenga to be made into eunuchs.[8]

The Mossi seem to have made a distinction between theft and pillage—

a practice whereby nobles deprived commoners of their property. Those nobles who lived among commoners quite often confiscated their neighbors' property. But this was not regarded as theft and was not punishable as such, although a rapacious nobleman could be sanctioned for terrorizing and "spoiling" a village. If a nobleman was caught performing an act that *was* considered theft, or if he was accused and found guilty of theft, he was severely punished. During Kaglere's reign, the people of a small village suffered a series of livestock thefts. One day, while the friends of a village chief were sitting with him, a dog came out of the chief's compound dragging an animal skin. The men recognized the skin as that described for a stolen goat, and decided to investigate. In the chief's courtyard they discovered the hole from which the dog had unearthed the skin. They also found the skins of several other stolen animals. The villagers took the village chief to the district chief, who found him guilty and exiled him from the region. In passing judgment, the district chief told him that he had been elected "to care for the village," but that he had betrayed his trust by robbing his own people.

According to Mossi law, willful homicide or murder was punishable by execution. The Mossi did not use wergild or "blood money," but insisted on the *lex talionis*, which they interpreted as "a life for a life." They did not believe that money or any other valuables could compensate for the life of a man, nor would they allow a slave to be executed in place of the murderer. They believed that only by executing the murderer himself could they prevent his victim's relatives from resorting to vengeance and thus "spoiling" the district or village.

A man who grievously wounded another was apprehended, bound, and taken to the village chief and subsequently to the district chief. Here he was kept in stocks in the serfs' quarter without being tried until his victim either died or recovered. If his victim recovered and the judge found that the wound had been inflicted accidentally, the defendant was fined or had his goods confiscated, but he was released. If the judge found that the victim had been wounded in a fair fight, the prisoner was usually censured and dismissed. The chief often warned the wounded man that he ought to have lived up to the Mossi axiom that a grown man is always able to protect himself. If, however, the trial revealed that the prisoner had ambushed his victim with the intent to kill, he either was fined several cows or had his entire property confiscated. District chiefs are known to have executed the perpetrators of cowardly ambushes even though their victims recovered.

If a man died at the hands of another, an inquest was held immediately. If the killing had been accidental or committed in self-defense, or if it was

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district chief's wrath. Thus, there was some method in the collection of this tribute and certain expectations had to be met, even though many of the contributors may have felt that their gifts were voluntary.

In direct contrast, Dim Delobson, himself a chief, states that Mossi chiefs demanded a stipulated amount from their villagers. He adds, however, that the tribute "varied in amount according to the resources of the contributors," and that the district chief set the "amount of cowries and grain due from each village in accordance with the number of its inhabitants."[24] According to him, the rate of assessment was usually 100 cowries for a married man and 50 for an adult bachelor (apparently, this difference was an acknowledgment of the woman's contribution to her husband's wealth). In addition, each adult male was assessed 10 baskets of millet of about 100 pounds each. Dim Delobson adds that to these exactions the district chief added his own contributions to the Mogho Naba, usually in the form of cattle.

It seems that Dim Delobson rationalized and regularized a rather informal system of contributions. The present-day Mossi declare that soil differences in the villages and variations in rainfall prevented a district chief from demanding a set tribute, because no one could tell whether a crop would be good or bad. Only a ruler's informers could tell him how much he should receive each year, and the chief based his exactions on this report. Several of my respondents agreed with Dim Delobson that the district chief provided mostly cattle for the annual tribute to the Mogho Naba, and that the village people furnished cowries, small animals, and grain.

A district chief was seldom wealthy, because he always had to use his revenue to fulfill unexpected obligations toward his subjects, his superiors in the political hierarchy, and his household. He had to be generous to his subjects, providing millet water, millet beer, and the more expensive imported kola nuts for those who visited and conferred with him daily. He was expected to provide food and shelter for the countless strangers who settled in his district, until they could provide for themselves. He also lodged and fed the messengers who brought him orders from the capital, and gave them gifts to take back to the provincial ministers. And he had to provide goods for the many members of his family who depended upon him. Finally, in the event of crop failure or famine in any of his villages, he had to provide grain from his granaries to feed the hungry. "How could he do otherwise? Was he not a 'father' to his people?"

The expectation that the district chief should provide hospitality to his subjects was so strong that those chiefs or princes who were deprived of an income for any reason often resorted to banditry to fulfil their obliga-

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tions. Binger, who found Boukary Koutou (the future Mogho Naba Wobogo) living in exile for having led a rebellion against his brother, Mogho Naba Sanum, tells us:

> Boukary has no resources, and does not even have the advantage of receiving periodic tribute from several large villages. In order to subsist and to maintain a certain status, he is compelled to live by pillage and even by brigandage. From time to time, his horsemen make incursions into the outskirts of some Gurunsi or Kipirsi village, and carry off by surprise the inhabitants whom they find working the fields or looking for wood. His people also hide and lie in wait along the roads to capture any persons who may pass within their range. This type of behavior has given Boukary Naba a bad reputation. However, the people who understand his position forgive him, knowing the situation in which his brother has placed him. And, in spite of all this, he has numerous partisans, and many others who would be happy to see him gain power.[55]

Those district chiefs or princes who wished to retain their power legitimately were forced to be generous or run the risk of losing the allegiance and good will of their villagers, who were their ultimate supporters.

It is very difficult to generalize about the amount of revenue collected by a village chief. He did not receive any revenue from the land used by his villagers. He treated the weogho in his village in the same manner as the district chief. If some families grew too large and wanted to establish permanent residence in the village bush, they asked the chief for permission to settle there. However, many village chiefs had special areas of waste for their own use. They had usually received them as gifts from some district chief, and therefore had the right to collect tribute on any crops, firewood, or fish obtained from these lands.

The average village chief's main source of revenue was derived from the agricultural and other labor of his wives and relatives. A village chief received a number of wives from his subjects and from aliens living in his village. These women helped cultivate his fields. If their labor was insufficient he called a sosogha, to which he often invited his wives' relatives. Some chiefs also had serfs and slaves who helped cultivate their land and kept their cattle as well.

The village chief did not have the power to tax his subjects. Instead, he functioned as a channel through which commodities and services passed up the hierarchy and on to Ouagadougou. Many villagers voluntarily helped the chief to repair his huts and compound walls and to cut thatch for his roofs. Many gave him baskets of grain and other vegetable products after the harvest. They also visited him and gave him presents during the annual rites to his ancestors. In contrast to higher chiefs, however, the village head

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[Post World War II Period]

Mossi chiefs of being a modernist, was elected as the first Vice-President of the new government. Not only was the Mogho Naba deprived of the opportunity to become the African head of the Upper Volta, but such stalwart supporters of the chiefs as Conombo and Bouda were left out of the government. Thus, after twelve years of opposition to Houphouët-Boigny, Mogho Naba Sagha and his chiefs were finally defeated. Their defeat was made even more ignominious by the elevation of a non-Mossi commoner to a position of dominance over the Mossi chiefs.[87]

Having lost out in the Upper Volta, the Mossi chiefs had no spokesman when the new Vice-Presidents of the Government Councils of the French West African territories and the European Presidents of these territories met at Dakar to discuss the problems of the truncated French West Africa Federation. No one mentioned the problem of the position of the traditional chiefs. As far as the politicians were concerned, the issue of the chief on the inter-territorial level was dead. It had relevance only in those territories where the chiefs retained some influence.

In an effort to consolidate their hold on the Upper Volta, the PDV-RDA members in the PDU met in September 1957 and sought to convert the PDU into a territorial subsection of the RDA. This move was resisted by the supporters of the chiefs within the PDU, especially by Conombo, who as leader of the PSEMA, an important faction within the PDU, had been completely eclipsed by Coulibaly and the PDV. Conombo resigned from the PDU and announced his intention to rebuild the PSEMA with the support of the Mossi chiefs. On November 12, however, before his plans could be put into action, Mogho Naba Sagha II died in Ouagadougou and political activities in the Upper Volta came to a standstill. A period of national mourning was proclaimed, and politicians from all parties gathered to pay their last respects and to eulogize the monarch.

Sagha's death, like that of all Mossi princes, was ascribed to foul means, although it was clear that he had succumbed to uremia. The people reacted to the interregnum by looting, and the shopkeepers in Ouagadougou and surrounding areas were compelled to close their establishments. "The people of Ouagadougou ran to Saba, but the merchants there were quite diligent, and needed no police force to protect them."[88] It was reported that those wives of the deceased ruler who were not at the palace at the time of his death took off the brass anklets denoting their royal status and became free women. If this actually happened, it was an unprecedented occurrence.

When the Mossi traditional electoral college convened to choose a new Mogho Naba, it reportedly considered the candidacy of both Moussa Con-